

The Role of Confucianism in the Reception of Karl Barth's Theology in Korea*

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The Korean Confucian Society was traditionally family and community-oriented. For this reason, Christianity in Korea was able to grow rapidly due to its family and community-rootedness. Thus it can be said that Korean Confucianism has played an important role in both the explosive growth of the Christian community and provided a basic foundation for the reception of Karl Barth's theology in Korea.

Barth's theology is characterized as evangelical and Christ-centered, with an emphasis on the worshipping community and the maintenance of high standards of individual conduct. Korean Confucianism also emphasized the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and practice, that is, the unity between theory and ethics within the family and community-based society. The Christian mission, beginning in the late 19th century in Korea, placed a strong emphasis on both the Word of God and faith as the means of achieving personal salvation through Jesus Christ within the community-based church.

The overall mission policy, according to historical records, was evangelism on the basis of the Nevius Method, which involved the worship of God, instruction, prayer, social service, and fellowship. Due to these positive elements in the Christian community, King Kojong (1861-1920), the last king of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), encouraged the Korean

people to believe and to accept the Christian missionaries along with their Christ-centred message.

Interestingly the Nevius Method is similar to Barth's twelve basic forms of the ministry of the community. First, under the category of the Word, they include: (1) the praise of God; (2) preaching; (3) instruction; (4) evangelization; (5) mission; (6) ministry of theology; and secondly, under the heading of Action: (7) prayer; (8) the cure of souls; (9) the production and existence of definite personal examples of Christian life and action; (10) diaconate; (11) prophetic action; (12) the establishment of fellowship (See Barth IV/3, 874-878 and also cf. Huntley 1987, 372-385).

Such forms of the ministry not only provide a practical, as well as a theoretical basis for Korean Churches and pastors, but also promote the rapid growth of the Church in Korea. The statement, "Knowing God is doing His will ethically and morally," became an extensively proclaimed motto by theologians and pastors in the Korean Christian community. Korean Christians accepted it without any resistance. This was because they had already been influenced by Confucianism with regard to their ethical principles of conduct as well as their religious views, as this article will seek to argue.

In this article, we will therefore sketch a brief historical account of Korean Confucianism and its characteristics. This will enable us to understand the early Protestant missionaries' contribution to the growth of Korean Christianity, and as a background to the later introduction of Barth's theology in Korea. This article also argues the Nevius Methods as a principal foundation for the reception of Barth's Christocentric theology in Korea. Finally we will explore the Confucian-Christian context in Korean Christianity as an ultimate foundation for the reception of Barth's theology in Korea.

An Historical Account of Korean Confucianism

It is not known when Confucianism first came to Korea, but it was the Three-Kingdom period (570 B. C.-668 A. D.)—Koguryo in the north, Paekche in the southwest, and Silla in the southeast—that provides accurate historical evidence of Confucianism in Korea (See Haboush 1991, 86).

The Silla Kingdom conquered the other two kingdoms in 668 and entirely unified the language, the law, and the culture that "...welded the Koreans into a homogeneous people and laid the foundation for modern Korea" (Paik 1970, 15). The unifying force of the Silla Kingdom marks a formative period for the ancient civilization of Korea as influenced by Chinese intellectual thought, and in particular by Confucianism (Grayson 1989, 30-64). Since Silla established a unified kingdom throughout the land of Korea (668-935 A. D), Confucianism was partly adopted as "...a measure of centralization, a patriotic code of conduct for its ruling warrior class in peace and war, and transmission of the arts of government to this class" (Haboush 1991, 87). The impact of Confucianism on Silla was particularly remarkable from the end of the seventh century. In 682, the Royal Confucian Academy was established for the more systematic education of aristocratic youths. Confucian social ethics were incorporated into the codes of conduct for the *hwarang*, a knightly organization consisting of aristocratic youth. The codes of conduct—loyalty to the ruler, filial piety to one's father, and trust between friends—were deemed useful in upholding political and social order and in maintaining the cohesiveness of the group.

Since the Silla government established a state examination to recruit officials in 788, questions in the examination included Confucian classics and history. Many Sillian students went to China to study and ultimately to prepare for this official examination. The first Sillian student who studied abroad was Chi-won Choi. He went to China in 875 and sojourned in Chang-An, the capital of the T'ang Dynasty. There he studied Confucian classics and had a chance to read Chinese Nestorian documents.¹

According to George Paik's statement, Chi-won Choi "...reached Chang-An about a century after the erection of the famous Nestorian Monument" (Paik, 24). It is still believed that Choi was the first Korean Confucian scholar to bring early Christian literature to Korea. This argument is supported by E. A. Gordon in her work entitled *Some Recent Discoveries in Korean Temple and Their Relationship to Early Eastern Christianity* (1914) and later by Timothy Richard in *Forty Five Years in*

China (1916). Kenneth S. Latourette summarizes this controversy in *The Development of Japan* (1926). A. C. Moule's work entitled *Christians in China before the Year 1500* (1930), discusses the Korean Confucian scholars' early contact with Eastern Christianity in China.

It was from 1258 to 1356 that Neo-Confucianism took root in Korea. In 1314, Koryo adopted the system of the civil service examination from the Yuan Dynasty and imported Chu Hsi's works entitled *The Five Classics* and *The Four Books*. These books introduced Neo-Confucianism to the Korean people.

Confucianism grew significantly during the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910). It has had a formative influence on the thinking and conduct of the Korean people. Yi Sung-Gye, the first king of the Chosun Dynasty, devoted himself to the revival of Confucianism. His primary task was to create a Confucian normative society. This is to say, "the founding of the Chosun Dynasty can be described as a Confucian revolution" (Haboush, 90). As a result of Yi's great reform program, based on the teachings and theories of Confucianism, King Sei-Jong (1418-1450), who was the grandson of Yi Sung-Gye, "...placed the people under a great debt of gratitude by inventing and encouraging the use of the Korean alphabet (*Hangul*), as a substitute for, and auxiliary to, Chinese characters" (Paik, 17).

The Characteristics of Korean Confucianism

One of the most important aspects of Korean Confucianism is "a respect for learning, cultivation and reverence in all relations" (Adams 1988, 240), which is fundamentally rooted in mutual and reciprocal relationships for the benefit of community. That is to say that Korean Confucianism is based on a strong sense of human solidarity within one's own community.

When the Chosun Dynasty carried out Confucian orthodoxy in its socio-political structure, it certainly affected the norms and values of social and familial systems. Scholars of Korean Confucianism generally agree that a family system becomes a basis for maintaining social harmony and stability. In this sense, Korean Confucianism is familial community-based. Most scholars recognize that not only does the system of Confucian practice still persist in Korea today, but it also exists in combination with

modern Korean Christianity.² As we shall see, its behavioral pattern and familial structure have exerted an influence on the Korean Christian community, since the beginning of Korea's evangelization by missionaries from the Western world.

Early Protestant Missionaries' Utilization of the Community-based Korean Confucianism for Their Evangelistic Works and as a Background to the Later Introduction of Barth's Theology in Korea

"The Million Movement" which was launched in 1909 by the General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea increased the evangelistic zeal of Korean Christians and eventually established a community or family-based Church in Korea. It has been asserted that the unique nature of the community-based Korean Confucian society, which is bound together by a system of patriarchal authority, was partially responsible in making the Million Movement successful. As Roy Shearer argued in his work *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea* (1966), "the Million Movement flowed along the web of family relationships" (147). According to Martha Huntley's story from her book *Caring, Growing, and Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea*,

When a person was delivered from evil spirits by Christian exorcism, his whole family was likely to embrace the new religion, impressed by its power and effectiveness. Thus, the Christian faith most often spread through family channels, for the family was the basic and strongest unit of Korean Confucian society. In other words, when a multi-individual decision occurs so that a whole social unit changes with only slight dislocation, it is called a "people movement" (1984, 125).

From this perspective, a distinctive feature of Korean Christianity from the beginning of early Protestant missionary work can be thus called "the familial community-based church," which contributed to the rapid growth of Christianity. Spencer Palmer in his monograph *Korea and Christianity: The Problem of Identification with Tradition* (1967) affirms that the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries regarded Korea as the best mission field in the world (See Palmer 1967, 19-33). This was because

they saw that Korea's community-based Confucian society emphasized the gathering of the people as the primary concern for the upbuilding of its own community.

On the other hand, the Million Movement was made possible due to the self-principle, especially the effective organization for self-government. The first establishment of the Korean Presbyterian Church in 1907 was independent and self-governing. Self-government was for witness, and this became a significant part of the forward flow of the Korean Church. For instance, the testimony of the Korean converts was far more effective as an evangelistic agency than the preaching of the missionaries. Moffett quotes M. C. Fenwick's experience,

Testifying in tears to the love of God in Christ...people simply laughed at me and said that was all well enough for me, a Westerner, but they were Koreans...One day...I saw how his testimony gripped the people as mine had never done...these Korean sinners listened that day to Mr. Kim because he, too was a Korean (Moffett 1962, 57).

It was also self-supporting; especially self-reliant in financial matters. By 1908, out of 188 Presbyterian churches in Korea, 186 were entirely self-supporting. Korean Christians themselves contributed more to the upbuilding of their church than they were receiving in missionary gifts from abroad.

It was natural for Korean Christians to be independent financially. This is because they had a personal community so-called *kye*, which was a sort of social cooperative system for raising funds as well as helping one another. *Kye* maintained community solidarity. It was traditionally sustained in a Korean Confucian society. In the broader context of Christianity, it is appropriate to express the Confucian conception of *kye* in light of the Christian doctrine of the covenant, which is manifested in God's relation to the people of Israel. As the divine commandments represented both a vertical relationship between God and the people of Israel and a horizontal relationship among people, the *kye*-oriented Korean Confucian community helped early Protestant church leaders formulate their own leadership according to the bonds of love, trust, and familiarity with the fellow church members under his or her care. For this reason, the

Korean Christian community has been characterized as the community of covenant, mutual support and stimulation for the benefits of others (Cf. Rore & Mars 1981, 125-130).

Interestingly, Ill-Soo Kim, in his article entitled "Organizational Patterns of Korean-American Methodist Churches: denomination and personal community," points out that Korean Presbyterian Churches outnumbered Korean Methodist Churches by more than five times (as of 1982, 5 million versus some 800,000), whereas, in the U.S., Methodists outnumbered Presbyterians by almost three times. He says the reasons for this explosive growth of Korean Presbyterianism beyond all denominations in Korea, are as follows:

- (1) The "religious affinity" between Presbyterianism and Confucianism;
- (2) The traditional propensity toward "personal community" (e.g., *kye*) and social codes (e.g., five cardinal relationships);
- (3) The Nevius plan as an effective strategy that enabled Korean Presbyterians to incorporate their new faith into their traditional organizational pattern of self-governance (Heup-Young Kim 1996, 194).

The Nevius Methods as a Principal Foundation for the Reception of Barth's Christocentric Theology in Korea

The principles of self such as self-propagation, self-government, and self-support were originally devised by the Reverend John L. Nevius (1829-1893), an experienced and scholarly missionary of the Presbyterian Mission in Shan-tung Province in northeastern China. That is why these principles were often called the Nevius Methods.

It was the year 1890 when John Nevius spent two weeks in Seoul, Korea, with seven young Presbyterian missionaries (Harry 1934, 87-88). Members of the group reported a brief explanation of the missionary policies manifested in the Nevius Methods. The central principles of this method may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Personal evangelism and wide itineration by the missionaries;
- (2) The Bible is central in every part of the work;

- (3) Self-propagation. Every believer is a teacher of someone and a learner from someone else better fitted. Every individual and group seeks to extend the work;
- (4) Self-government. Every group is under its chosen unpaid leaders; circuits under their own paid helpers, who will later yield to pastors;
- (5) Self-support, with all chapels provided by the believers; each group, as soon as founded, beginning to pay toward the circuit helper's salary;
- (6) Systematic Bible study for every believer under his group leader and circuit helper;
- (7) Strict discipline enforced by Biblical penalties;
- (8) Cooperation and union with other bodies, or at least territorial division;
- (9) Non-interference in lawsuits or any such matters;
- (10) General helpfulness, where possible, in the economic life of the people (Clark 1971, 87).³

In 1891, just a year after the Reverend John Nevius' visit to Korea, the Board of the Korea Mission led by the early Presbyterian missionaries, Underwood, Moffett, Avison and Baird, thus established "The Presbyterian Northern Mission Rules and By-laws" that were directly influenced by Nevius' unique methods (Shearer 1965, 466). The leading members of the Board enthusiastically adopted the ten statements in 1893 as the most appropriate principles of missionary policy and practice for the continued growth and strength of the Christian Church in Korea. They ultimately adopted the Nevius Methods for the indigenization of the Korean church (Paik, 161). This was because Nevius' practice was to preach the Word of God and then to carry out actions in the form of healing or teaching for non-Christians, which is closely related to Barth's theology of ministry.

Later on, the Nevius Methods were modified into four central points: the self-principle; biblical emphasis; education; and medical work, which were "aimed at the creation of native churches" in the context of a particular socio-religious-cultural circumstance of Korea (Woodberry 1953, 12).

Medical work was strongly emphasized. It was an effective way of preaching the Gospel to the sick and the poor. In this way, Nevius' Methods was practically concerned with social work as an essential part of the missionary task.

Although early Protestant missionaries used medicine and education as opening wedges, their initial focus was upon evangelism in which the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ through the saving work of the Holy Spirit, was recognized as the fullness of truth and grace. That is to say that the authority of Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, remained the foundation of all missionary works in Korea. In fact, this foundation helped Korean Christians and Churches cultivate a very conservative Christian life as well as a strong belief in the Bible as the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Moffett, 130-131).

Such a point is closely linked to Karl Barth's theology, which is radically Christocentric. Therefore, the contemporary Korean Protestant Church proved to be open later to the impact of Barth's theology of Jesus Christ as "the living Word of God, Scripture as the written Word of God, and the proclaimed Word of God" (See Barth, I/1, 88-120). It is coincidental that both Barth and Nevius' theological rootedness is in Calvinism. The ideas of the Reformer John Calvin have had a great influence on Korean theologians, especially those belonging to the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Tonghap), which represents over 60 percent of the Christian population. It has thus been natural for the Korean Protestant Church, mainly the Presbyterian Church, to adopt Barth's theology with its rootedness in Calvin as its guiding principle in the growth of its church and theological education (See Huntley 1987, 407).⁴ The Presbyterian Seminary of Korea, founded by Samuel A. Moffet in 1901, is the first and the largest Presbyterian Seminary in Korea. This seminary introduced Barth's theology to Korea in the 1950s. For example, Professor Myung-Hyuk Kim and Tong-Sik Chi, who are well-known students of Barth, are leaders of the "Karl Barth Society" in Korea. There are also many theologians and pastors who claim to be followers of and interpreters of Barth in Korea. It is further to be noted that the Korean Methodist Church also adopted Barth's theology very eagerly.

The Nevius Methods ultimately prepared the Korean Christian Church to be a gathering, upbuilding, and sending Christian community learning God's Word, praying, worshiping, serving others, and sending missionaries to other countries. The Korean Confucian community was

zealous for gathering and upbuilding for the benefit of a whole community. This has been united to a remarkable degree in the early Korean Protestant Church's "speech" and "action" ministries, such as the zeal for worship, preaching, Sunday school for children and youth, foreign missions, prayer meetings, social service, nurture of pastoral and lay leadership, and fellowship (Huntley 1987, 372-385).

Such forms of ministries are closely related to Barth's doctrine of ministry, which is balanced between theory and praxis. These forms of ministries helped the Korean Churches to increase the number of their congregation, and to focus on the foreign mission through practicing their faith in Jesus Christ. Significantly, the Korean Church "sent its first missionary in 1907 and is now sending many missionaries" for world evangelization (Nelson 1983, 90). In this respect, it can be argued that Korean Christianity is characterized as the gathering, the upbuilding, and the sending of the community in accordance with Barth's definitive descriptions of the church as the gathering, the upbuilding and the sending of the Christian community.⁵

The Confucian-Christian Context in Korean Christianity as an Ultimate Foundation for the Reception of Barth's Theology in Korea

Early Protestant missionaries forbade drinking and smoking. As Korean Confucians emphasized individual ethical discipline and a sense of justice, Protestant missionaries taught people to be ethical (See Jung-Young Lee 1983, 400). They insisted on a rigid and high moral code, strict Sabbath observance, and respect and obedience to the Word of God as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. The strong ethical code of Protestantism eventually appealed to intellectuals trained in Confucian morality. In this respect, Martha Huntley argues that:

The Korean Protestant Church's legacy from Calvinist and Wesleyan missionaries, added to Confucian ethics and thought patterns, has had a stabilizing influence. The missionaries in shaping a unifying conservative theology and conformity of opinion regarding standards of Christian conduct helped to provide a strong framework for the structure of the Korean Church (1987, 407-408).

As Samuel H. Moffett notes, "Christianity did not deny much that people had loved in the old beliefs. Like Confucianism, it taught righteousness and revered learning" (52). David Kwang-Sun Suh further argues: "Korean Christians are more Calvinist, more Puritan than the Calvinists. Much of this is due in actuality to Confucian ethics which exemplified rigidity, authoritarianism and a basically pure life."⁶ James S. Gale's remark is convincing that:

The gentleness of the Korean people, their appreciation of high morals, notwithstanding the lack of the same in their own history, their exalting of principles of right, is a preparation for the gospel call. Outwardly, by habit, custom, and ceremonial form, they are equipped to understand the Bible (154).

Therefore, it can be argued that the role of Confucianism in the growth of Korean Christianity was great, since Confucian ethics and thought patterns had a stabilizing influence on the formation of the evangelistic Korean Christian community and its theology (Cf. Huntley 1987, 407-408). Doo-Yong Chung, in his work *Kidokyo wa Yukyo* [Christianity and Confucianism] (1994), asserts that Confucianism-influenced Korean society was open to the reception of Western Christianity. This is because there are many similarities between Christian and Confucian ethics.

It was Confucianism that exclusively influenced the Korean peoples' ethical behaviour as well as their religious views. For instance, the Confucian practice of ancestor worship is an example that implies the religious aspect of Confucianism and its influence upon the Korean people. Jung-Young Lee's editorial work *Ancestor Worship and Christianity in Korea* (1983) explicitly demonstrates this issue. Interestingly, H. B. Hulbert maintains that the average Korean takes his religious ceremonies from ancestor worship, seeks the efficacy of Buddhistic prayers, devoutly bows his head at the shrine of mountain demons, and recites Confucian classics (403-404). Allen Clark states: "all three religions—Buddhism, Confucianism, and the spirit-worship—are mixed up together and the same person finds himself involved in all three, according to the circumstances of the moment" (27). David Chung defines such a tendency

as “religious syncretism” that shows a religious hunger among Korean people (See David Chung 1959). This religious syncretism of the Korean people, as George Paik says, is “an indication of a total indifference and undue tolerance toward religion” (27). Paik further notes: “as in the ancient Roman world, there was a tendency toward syncretism” (19). For him, both the ethical codes of Confucianism and the spiritual world of Shamanism played significant roles in the religious development of Korea, but it was Korean Confucianists who discovered a personal God (25). Accordingly, Myung-Hyuk Kim insists that “Christianity in Korea was not propagated by foreign missionaries; it was introduced by Korean scholars through their contact with Christian literature obtained in Peking” (237). Since they found compatibility between Confucianism and Christianity, it was natural for them to accept the Christian message and contribute to the growth of Christianity.

In fact, both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Korea were introduced and developed by the Korean Confucian scholars, who converted to Christianity. When Christianity was introduced into Korea in the early part of the seventeenth century, it was primarily Confucian scholars who translated the English (The King James Version) and Chinese Bible into *Hangul*. The first theological works in Korean, such as *Sung-gyo Yo-ji* [Essentials of the Holy Teaching] by Yi Pyok (1754-1786) and *Chugyo Yo-ji* [Essentials of the Lord’s Teaching] by Chong Yak-Jong (1760-1801), were written and completed by Confucian scholars (See Diaz 1986 and Ri 1979). They also translated the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, hymns, and other articles of faith from Chinese or English (Paik 141-146).

For instance, Yak-Yong Chong’s *Yikiron* [Two Theories] emphasizes one of the Confucian virtues, *Kyung-chun-ae-in*, that is, “respect the Heaven and love your neighbor.” Chong found that this concept is similar to Christian teaching, “love the Lord your God” and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Han 1996, 159-160). Ik Yi saw that there is an affinity between Christianity and Confucianism on the issue of filial piety; for the fifth of the great commandments of the *Torah* states: “Honor your father and mother, so that your days may be long in the land

that the Lord your God is giving you" (Exod 20:12). For him, honoring earthly parents is thus an important duty that both religious traditions emphasized coincidentally. Han-Sun Chong's work *San'gi Sansu* [Worshipping Heaven] shows that the Ten Commandments and the Confucian Five Morals and Three Fundamentals, are compatible, showing that the indigenization of Christian ethics within a Korean Confucian context is possible (Kyung-Jae Kim 1996, 185).

With respect to the Confucian scholars' initial contact with Christianity, Spencer J. Palmer argues that the Holy Spirit primarily worked through Confucianism as a preparation for the evangelization of the people of Korea. This is because he sees that a Confucian's definition of God, humanity, and community is remarkably similar to Western theologians' works concerning the concept of God, humanity, the Church, justification and sanctification (See Palmer, 3-18, 82-84, and 88-96). Christianity has the concept of God, whereas Confucianism has the theory of Heaven. Although the Confucian definition of Heaven is different from the Christian concept of God, Confucians see Heaven as the "Dominator," "Creator," "Sustainer," "Revealer," and "Judge" in accordance with Christian definitions of God (See Fu 1988, 177-188).

On another level, Heup-Young Kim, a Presbyterian disciple of Barth's theology, argues that one of the Confucian teachings—the intellectual pursuit or the Taoist search for Truth—is also similar to the Christian message concerning the idea of Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life for all who can accept His Word in faith. Kim thus tried to formulate a Confucian Christology on the basis of both the Confucian term "*Tao*" and Barth's Christocentric theology, for he believes that a strong resemblance exists between Confucianism and Christianity (See Heup-Young Kim, 335-364). In this respect, Julia Ching's point of view is helpful that:

Confucianism as a dynamic discovery of the worth of the human person, of the possibility of moral greatness and even sagehood, of one's fundamental relationship to others in a society based on ethical values, of an interpretation of reality and a metaphysics of the self that remain open to the transcendental—all this, of course, the basis for a true sense of human dignity, freedom, and equality, is still relevant to Korean Christians (Küng and Ching 1989, 90).

Huston Smith, in his work entitled *The World's Religions* (1991), holds that "in the case of Korean Christians, Confucianism is not exactly the faith of 'others'. For them it is 'theirs', or, at least, part of 'theirs'" (390). For Smith, it is the Confucian tradition that makes Korean Christians' religious life much deeper and more abundant. As Michael Kalton rightly observes, "Korean society undoubtedly possesses the deepest and most vital Confucian tradition" (270). Donald N. Clark notes: "one cannot escape the impression that Christianity is now a Korean people's religion and no longer a foreign import... If any society can be considered a particularly favorable laboratory for the Confucian-Christian dialogue, it must be Korea" (36). Moreover, as Ha-Tai Kim has stated, the unique situation of Korea demands that Korean theologians engage themselves in the comparative study of Christianity and Confucianism; if they do so with openness they will make important contributions to world Christianity (214).

Therefore, it should be noted that, according to Yee-Heum Yoon's recent survey, "more than ninety percent of self-identified church-going Korean Protestant Christians are virtually practical members of the Confucian 'soft' community who still hold to Confucian moral norms and practice traditional Confucian social customs" (Heup-Young Kim, 4).⁷ In other words, Korean Christians tend to identify themselves as Christians, but paradoxically their practices in customs and ethics are based on Confucianism.

Most Korean theological scholars do not deny that Confucianism fundamentally influenced Korean Christianity (Cf. Kang 1993, 309). Heup-Young Kim's insistence on the need for a Confucian-Christian dialogue is particularly imperative in Korea because of the following three reasons:

- (1) Korea is the only country in East Asia where Christianity is no longer a small minority religion, but takes a leading role in society; (2) in the history of East Asia, Korea was most strongly influenced by Confucianism, and still is; (3) Korean Christianity is basically a Confucian Christianity (3-4).

Due to this Confucian-Christian context in Korean Christianity, Kim in his work entitled *Wang Yang-Ming and Karl Barth* (1996) argues that the

Confucian-Christian dialogue as a genuine theological task is possible. For him, the common issue of Wang's confuciology of self-cultivation and Barth's theology of sanctification is "a point of contact in which a genuine Confucian-Christian dialogue can be made" (136).

To be specific, Sung-Bum Yun, the Methodist interpreter of Barth's theology as well as the founder of Sung theology, in his work *Han'gukjok Sinhak: Song ui Haesokhak* [The Korean Theology: The Hermeneutics of Sincerity] (1972), argues that a genuine Confucian-Christian dialogue and formulation of a Korean theology of Confucianism is possible by integrating the theology of Karl Barth and Neo-Confucianism. This is because Karl Barth, as he has argued, "...has significantly influenced Korean Reformed theology, which was ultimately influenced by Confucianism" (Yun 1972, 14). Martha Huntley supports Yun's argument. In her work entitled *Caring, Growing, and Changing* (1984), she correspondingly claims that the socio-cultural legacy of Confucianism influenced Korean Reformed theology (225-318). There is no doubt that a Confucian-Christian encounter in the Korean Christian faith exists. Accordingly, it can also be argued that the indigenization of Barth's theology with Korean Confucianism is possible.

Concluding Remark

It is true that Confucianism contributed directly and indirectly to individual stability and social solidarity, as well as morality in Korea. Moreover, its strong ethical legacy for both personal and group harmony became the leading system of thought in the culture, society, economy and politics of the Korean people. Due to this stabilizing influence of Confucianism, it was also natural that Roman Catholicism and Protestantism were initially introduced and developed by Korean Confucian scholars who were not only eager to reform their corrupted Confucian government, but also apparently saw Christianity as a new ideology which could build a political as well as a family system of harmony and morality for the people of Korea. Clearly, Korean Christianity was most strongly influenced by Confucianism and still is. Accordingly, Korean Christianity is strikingly a Confucian-influenced

Christianity and that therefore Confucianism has played a very important role in the reception of Barth's theology in Korea.

Notes

*I would like to express my deep appreciation to Professor William Klempa whose interest in the theology of Karl Barth has encouraged and guided me in the pursuit of this research. His supervision and assistance in directing me to sources have been invaluable.

¹See "Choi Chi won," *The Korea Magazine*, I/1 (Jan, 1917), 13. The Nestorian Christians, characterized by a vigorous missionary zeal, carried the gospel to India, Arabia and China. The incipient period of the Nestorian mission in China was from 635 to 640 A. D. (Cf. Chang Sik Lee, "A Study of A Chinese Nestorian Sutra, 'Jesus Messiah'," *Northeast Asia Journal of Theology* 13 [Sept, 1974], 47). For the most recent research on the teaching of Nestorius, see Friedrich Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Lenox Hill, 1975) and A. Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in Asia and the Far East: A New Document* (Manchester: The University Press, 1952).

²For a survey of the historical development of the Korean Confucianism in relation to Christianity, see Pyong-Do Yi, *Han Kuk Yu Hak Sa Choko* [History of the Korean Confucianism] (Seoul National University Press, the Department of History, 1959).

³For a detailed summary of the Nevius Methods, see Frederick M. Woodberry, "The Nevius Methods" (B.Th. Thesis, The Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1953).

⁴For an analysis of Barth's interpretation of some aspects of Calvin's theology see William Klempa, "Barth as a Scholar and Interpreter of Calvin," *Calvin Studies* 7 (1994): 31-50.

⁵See David J. Cho, "The Growth of Korean Missions and Its Contribution to World Evangelization," in *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, 120-125.

⁶See his article entitled "American Missionaries and One Hundred Years of Korean Protestantism," address for the Royal Asiatic Society of Seoul in October 27, 1982.

⁷For details on this point, see Yee-Heum Yoon, "The Contemporary Religious Situation in Korea," a paper presented in the Conference on Religion and Contemporary Society in Korea, Center of East Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, November 11-12, 1988.

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